Senate Panel Now Probing Nixon Funds

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The Senate select Watergate committee has launched an investigation into President Nixon's personal finances, according to informed sources.

The investigation will include subpoenaing records given by the President to Coopers and Lybrand, the New York accounting firm that audited the purchases of Mr. Nixon's residential property in Florida and California, the sources said. The audit was done at Mr. Nixon's request.

In addition, the sources said that the committee will seek to question the President's personal secretary, Rose Mary Woods, and expects to examine Mr. Nixon's personal bank records.

The committee effort to investigate the President's personal finances is likely to spark another dispute with the White House over executive privilege, and one White House source predicted last week that the President would resist the inquiry.

The committee's chief investigator, Carmine Bellino,

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WATERGATE, From A1

hopes to assemble a detailed profile of Mr. Nixon' net worth, income and expenditures over the last several years, one source said.

The Senate committee, however, is unable to subpoena personal tax returns because the power to do so was not specifically given the committee in the Senate resolution that created it.

Attorneys for the Senate committee, however, feel certain that they have sufficient grounds to probe into the President's personal finances because they have turned up numerous contradictions from witnesses concerning $100,000 in purported campaign money given by billionaire Howard Hughes to Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo, a close friend of Mr. Nixon's.

Two Republican sources on the Senate committee variously labeled the probe of the $100,000 and Mr. Nixon's personal finances as a "fishing expedition" and "a last ditch effort" to turn public attention again to the committee's work.

Essentially, the committee has four contradictory stories about the purpose of the delivery of $100,000 in cash to Rebozo in 1969-70 and its return earlier this year to a Hughes attorney, Chester Davis.

Rebozo has told Senate investigators that he considered the money an advance campaign contribution for Mr. Nixon's re-election in 1972.

Robert A. Maheu, the former chief of Hughes financial interests in Nevada, has indicated that the money was earmarked for Mr. Nixon's personal use.

Richard Danner, the Hughes emissary who made the cash transfers to Rebozo, has given still a third version, saying that he thought the money was for the 1970 congressional races.

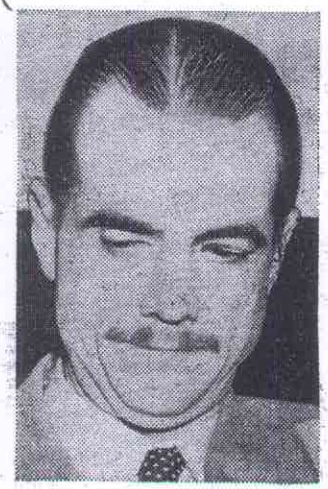
Davis, the Hughes attorney who received the money back from Rebozo this year, has told investigators that Rebozo indicated he did not know exactly why he received the $100,000 which came in two $50,000 installments, one in 1969 and another in 1970.

Committee sources said that Rebozo has also been unable to explain satisfactorily why the $100,000 was kept in safe deposit boxes for nearly three years and then returned. Rebozo reportedly has said he returned the money because the transaction might prove to be an embarrassment.

The sources said the Sen-

RICHARD NIXON

C. G. (BEBE) REBOZO



HOWARD HUGHES

. . . stories about them contradictory

his San Clemente estate in 1969.

"It may be a coinci-
ate committee staff is investigating whether any connection exists between the $100,000 and the financial support given by Rebozo to the President's purchase of
dence," one source said last week, "but the first $50,000 in the contribution came . . . at the time of the property purchase and Rebozo has said that the President needed money."

In the audit of the President's purchase of San Clemente and Key Biscayne property, Coopers and Ly-Brand, the New York accounting firm, disclosed officially for the first time in August that Rebozo was a financial backer with Robert H. Abplanalp, another Nixon friend, in supporting the San Clemente purchases.

Rebozo, according to the audit, gained an interest in the San Clemente estate in December, 1970, but Abplanalp has snce indicated that he bought out Rebozo's interest.

The President has denied that any campaign money was used in the purchase of his property in San Clemente and Key Biscayne.

Senate committee sources said that staff attorneys are not yet convinced that the $100,000 in Hughes money was in fact a campaign contribution.

"Rebozo says it was campaign money," one source said, "but no one is convinced . . . Rebozo's story is that he kept $100,000 in cash in safe deposit boxes for almost three years. Now you tell me, is that logical for an investor to keep the money and boot at least $20,000 in interest? There is something funny about that money."

The sources said that Rebozo told the Senate committee staff in an interview Monday that Rose Mary Woods was the only other person who knew about the $100,000 Hughes contribution.

Accordingly, the Senate committee intends to interview her to see if her story is the same as Rebozo's.

However, one White House source said yesterday that the President would certainly oppose an attempt to question his personal secretary.

The White House source said: "The President is likely to look on an attempt to interview his personal secretary as unfavorably as the attempt to get his White House tapes — it might even be more sensitive."

Earlier in the year, committee chairman Sen. Sam Ervin (D-N.C.) had declined to let the staff interview Rose Mary Woods on the grounds that there was no compelling need.

However, the investigation into the $100.000 from Hughes and the prospect of probing the President's personal finances, according to committee sources, offer the best opportunity for the committee to turn up new revelations.

Indication that the Senate committee has begun an investigation of the President's personal finances first came Friday from a Republican source on the committee.

The source said that the Democratic majority staff had launched the probe without the knowledge of the minority Republican staff. The source complained about the secrecy of the majority investigations and maintained that he had learned of the probe from a Democratic staff member who felt the investigation was unwarranted and designed specifically to embarrass the President.

The Republican source did not know the specifics of the contradictions in the statements surrounding the $100,000 in Hughes money. These details were later provided by other sources.